

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method in a communications device for transmitting packets, the method comprising:
 - receiving packets, each packet being a control packet or a data packet;
 - storing the received packets in memory of the communications device;
 - ~~selecting the stored packets based on whether the packets are control packets or data packets;~~
 - when the stored packets include a control packet and a data packet,
 - determining whether transmitting of the control packet will delay the transmitting of the data packet more than a certain amount of time;
 - when it is determined that the data packet will be delayed more than the certain amount of time, selecting the data packet; and
 - when it is determined that the data packet will not be delayed more than the certain amount of time, selecting the control packet;
 - retrieving the selected ~~packets~~ packet from memory of the communications device;
 - and
 - ~~transmitting the retrieved packets in order of their selection~~ packet.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the memory of the communications device includes a portion for storing data packets and a separate portion for storing control packets.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein each portion of the memory is a FIFO buffer.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the communications device has multiple ports and the selecting of the ~~stored packets~~packet is performed for packets to be transmitted via the same port.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the packets with a packet type of control include command packets.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the packets with a packet type of control include status packets.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the packets with a packet type of control include message packets.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1 including:
 - while transmitting a data packet,
 - receiving a control packet;
 - interrupting the transmission of the data packet;
 - transmitting the control packet; and
 - after the control packet is transmitted, continuing with the interrupted transmission of the data packet.
9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein each packet has a header and the continuing includes transmitting a header corresponding to the interrupted portion of the data packet.
10. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein each packet has a header and the continuing includes transmitting the remainder of the data packet without transmitting a new header.

11. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the interrupting of the transmission includes transmitting a preempt primitive and wherein the continuing with the interrupted transmission includes transmitting a continue primitive.
12. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the communications device is a switch that connects host devices to data store devices.
13. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the communications device is part of a storage area network.
14. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the selecting includes selecting control packets before selecting data packets.
15. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the selecting includes applying a selection algorithm that gives preference to selecting control packets over data packets.
16. (Currently Amended) A method in a communications device for transmitting packets, the method comprising:
 - receiving packets in an order, each packet being a first packet type or a second packet type; and
 - transmitting the received packets in an order that is different from the order in which the packets were received based on whether the packets are a first packet type or a second packet type, unless the transmitting of a packet in the different order would delay the transmitting of a packet more than a certain amount of time.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the first packet type is a data packet and the second packet type is a control packet and control packets are transmitted before data packets.
18. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the transmitting includes selecting control packets before selecting data packets.
19. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the transmitting includes selecting in accordance with a selection algorithm that gives preference to control packets over data packets.
20. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the communications device has multiple ports and wherein the received packets are transmitted via the same port.
21. (Original) The method of claim 20 wherein the packets are received via a single port.
22. (Original) The method of claim 20 wherein the packets are received via different ports.
23. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the communications device is a switch that connects host devices to data storage devices.
24. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the communications device is part of a storage area network.
25. (Currently Amended) A communications device comprising:
 - a memory;
 - a receive component that receives packets and stores the received packets in the memory, each packet being a control packet or a data packet, wherein

control packets are stored in a control packet queue and data packets are stored in a data packet queue; and

a transmit component that retrieves the packets from the memory, wherein the retrieving is associated with a selection algorithm that if each queue contains a packet the selection algorithm selects a control packet for retrieval unless a certain condition is satisfied in which case the selection algorithm selects a data packet for retrieval ~~and in an order based on whether the packets are control packets or data packets~~ and that transmits the retrieved packets in order of retrieval.

26. (Currently Amended) The communications device of claim 25 ~~wherein the memory includes a portion for storing data packets and a separate portion for storing control packets,~~ wherein the condition is satisfied when the selection of a control packet would delay the transmitting of a data packet more than a certain amount of time.
27. (Original) The communications device of claim 26 wherein each portion of the memory is a FIFO buffer.
28. (Original) The communications device of claim 25 including multiple ports, each with a transmit component.
29. (Original) The communications device of claim 25 wherein the transmit component interrupts transmitting of a data packet to transmit a control packet.
30. (Original) The communications device of claim 29 wherein transmitting of the interrupted data packet continues after the control packet is transmitted.

31. (Original) The communications device of claim 30 wherein the interrupting of the transmitting includes transmitting a preempt primitive and wherein the continuing with the interrupted data packet includes transmitting a continue primitive.
32. (Original) The communications device of claim 25 wherein the communications device is a switch that connects host devices to data store devices.
33. (Original) The communications device of claim 25 wherein the communications device is part of a storage area network.
34. (Original) The communications device of claim 25 wherein control packets are retrieved before data packets.
35. (Original) The communications device of claim 25 wherein packets are retrieved based on a retrieval algorithm that gives preference to retrieving control packets over data packets.
36. – 39. (Canceled)
40. (New) A method in a communications device for transmitting packets to a storage device in a storage area network, the method comprising:
receiving a data packet indicating data to be written to the storage device of the storage area network;
receiving a control packet indicating a request for data to be read from the storage device of the storage area network; and
when neither the received data packet and the received control packet has been sent, sending the received control packet to the storage device before sending a received data packet regardless of the order of having received the

packets, so that the storage device can start reading the data of the storage device before receiving the data of the data packet and so that the control packet is not delayed by a data packet.

41. (New) The method of claim 40 wherein the communications device is a switch that connects host devices to data store devices.
42. (New) The method of claim 40 wherein the communications device is a switch with multiple ports and wherein the packets are sent via the same port.
43. (New) The method of claim 40 including:
 - while sending a data packet,
 - receiving a control packet;
 - interrupting the sending of the data packet;
 - sending the control packet; and
 - after the control packet is sent, continuing with the interrupted sending of the data packet.